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(54) **METHOD, SYSTEM, AND GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR POSITIONING AN INSERTION MARKER IN A TOUCH SCREEN DISPLAY**

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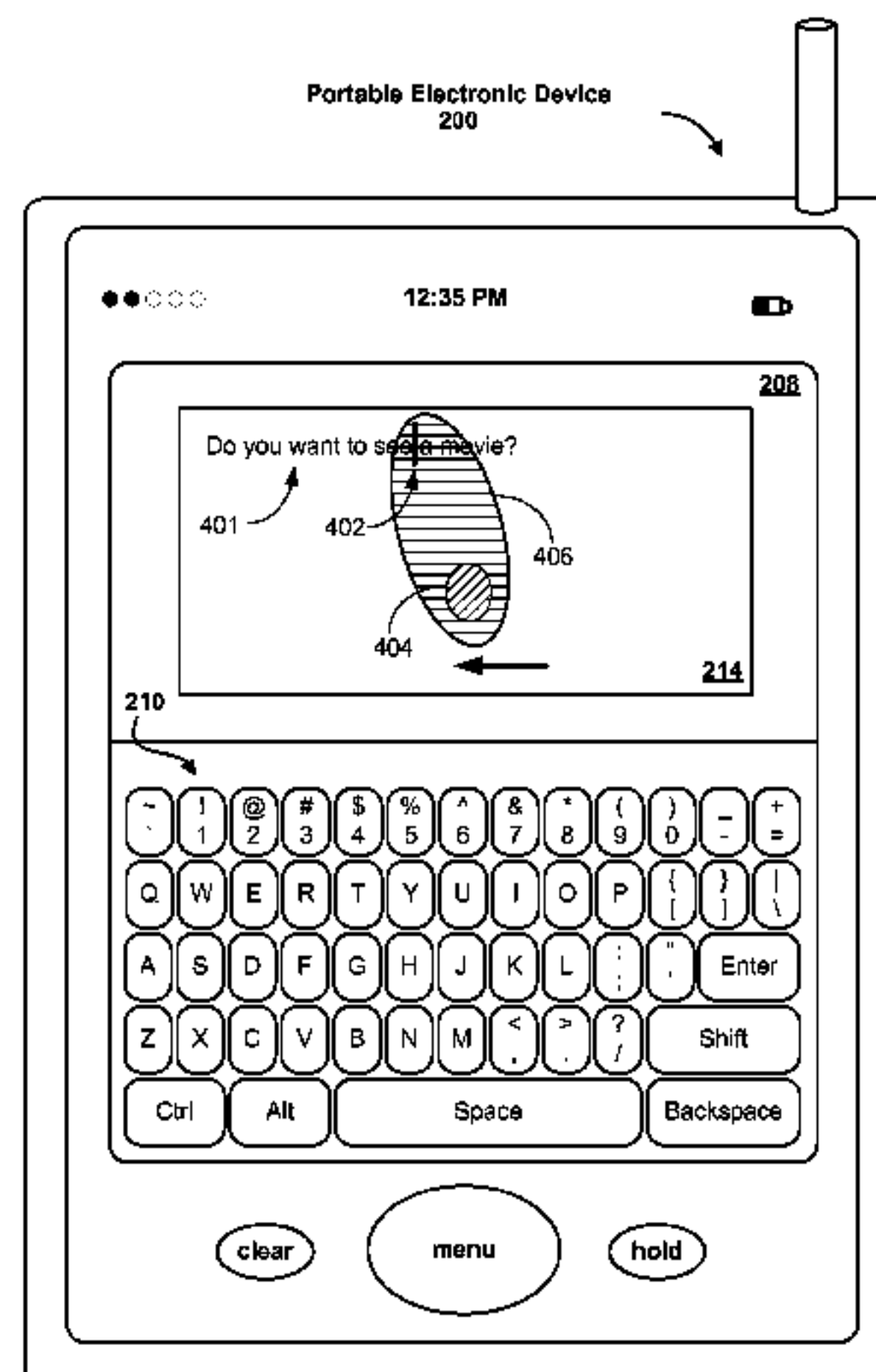
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An insertion marker that is displayed on a touch screen may be moved by a user via an insertion marker placement aid. The insertion marker placement aid is displayed on the touch screen after a contact with the touch screen is detected. The insertion marker placement aid provides visual feedback to the user, indicating that the insertion marker is subject to repositioning by the user. When the contact is moved across the touch screen, the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid is moved in accordance with the movement of the contact. When the contact is broken (i.e., no longer detected), the insertion marker placement aid is removed from display and the insertion marker comes to rest.

19 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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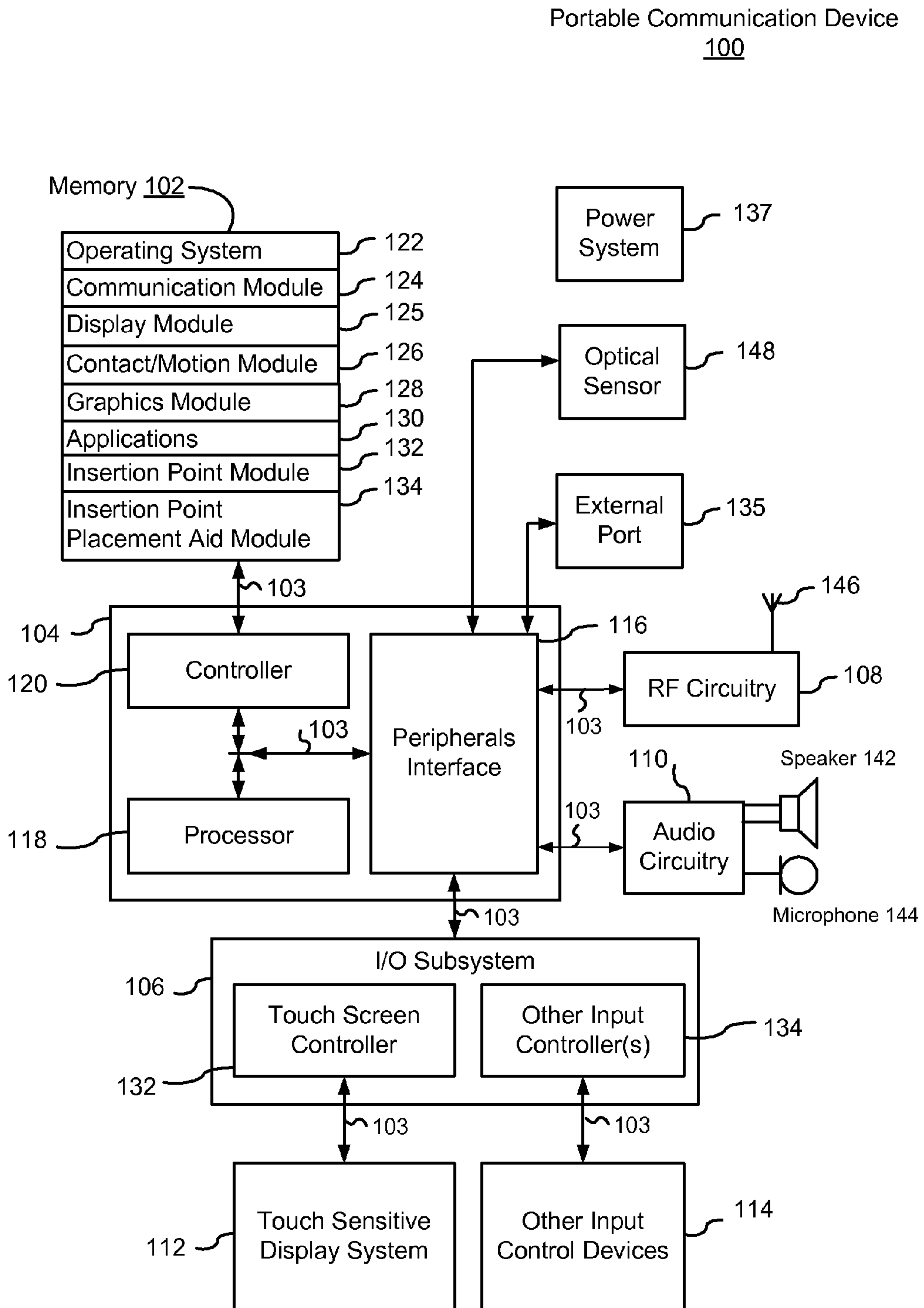


FIG. 1

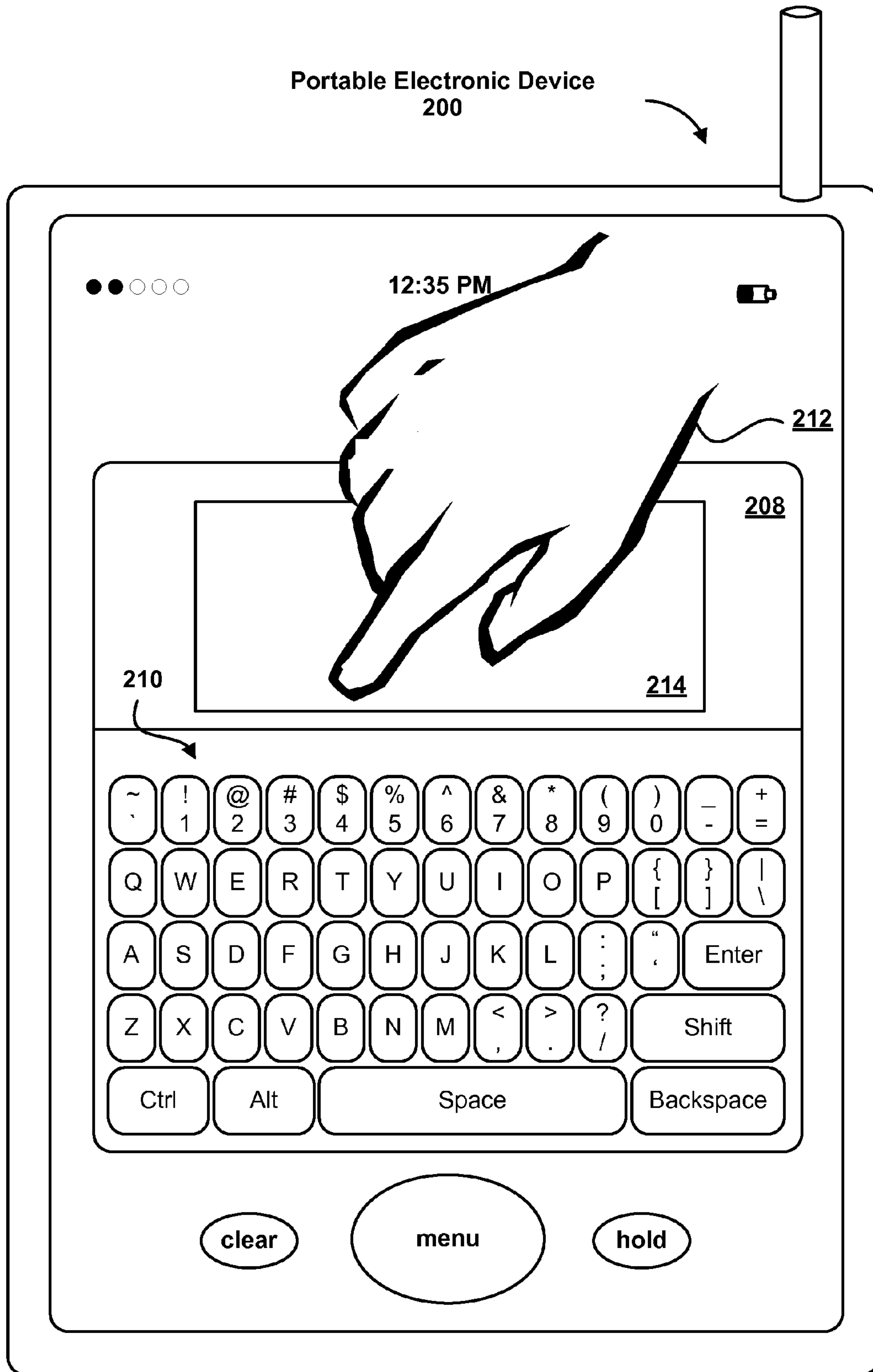


FIG. 2

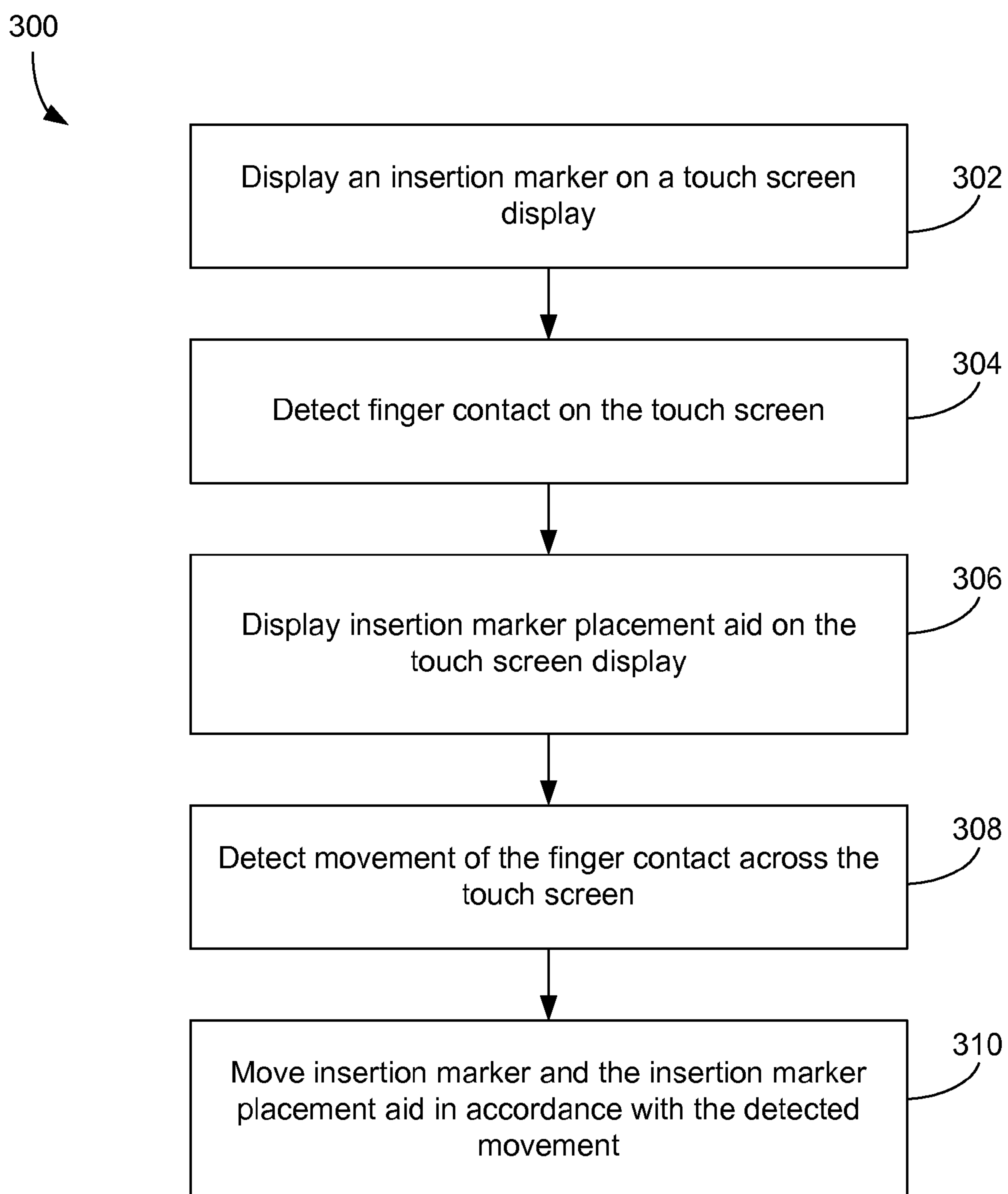


FIG. 3

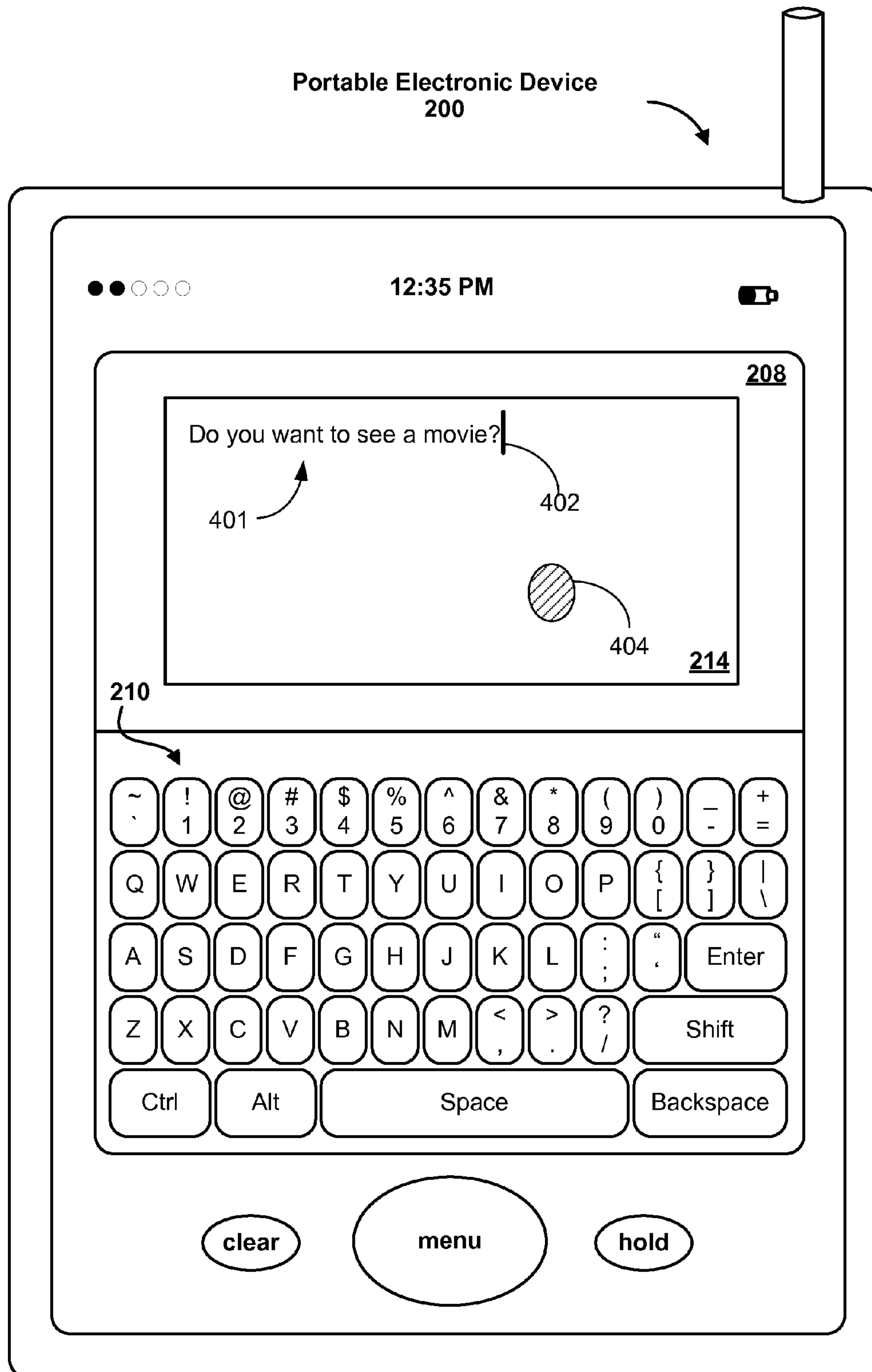


FIG. 4A

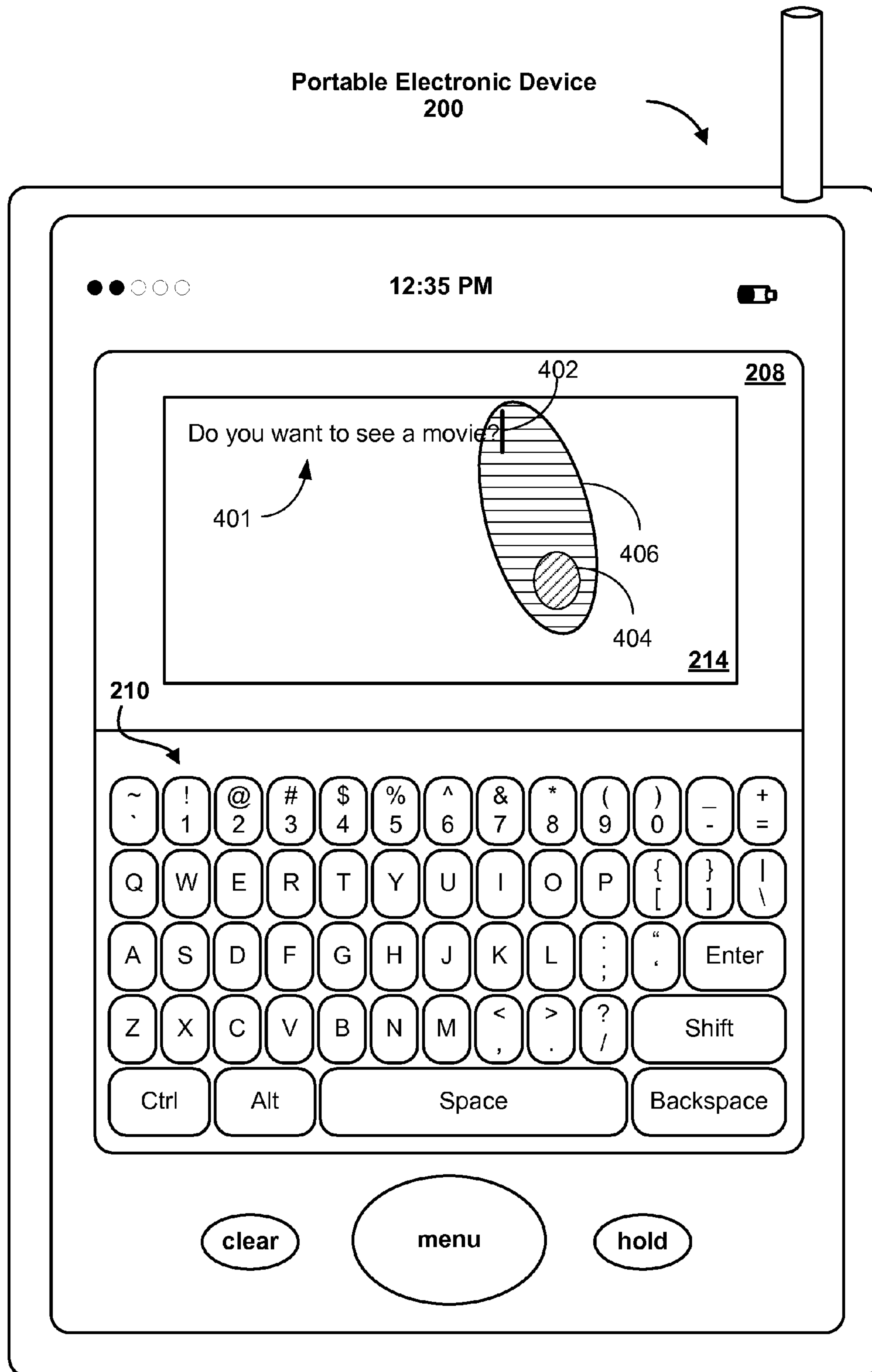


FIG. 4B

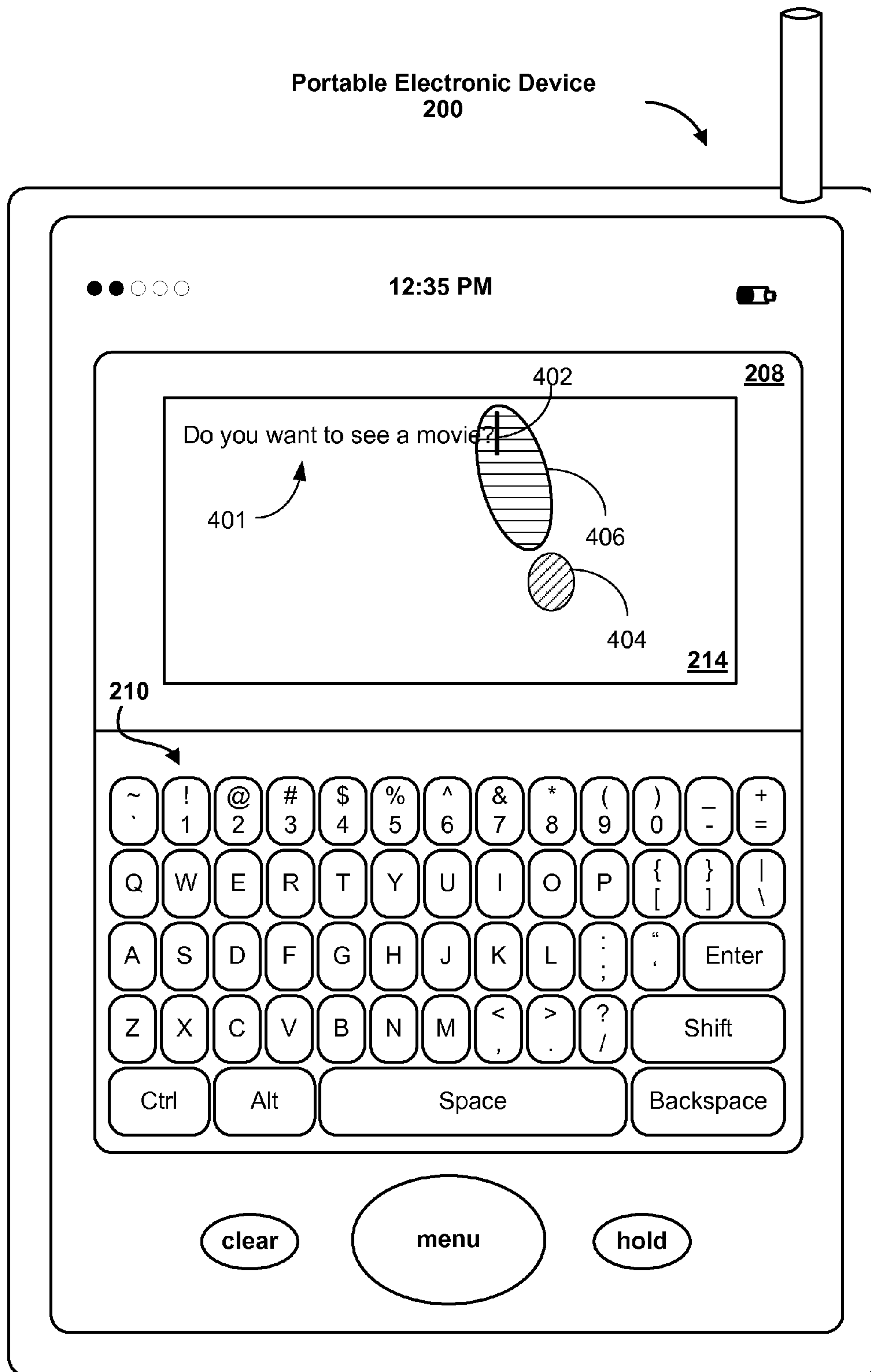


FIG. 4C

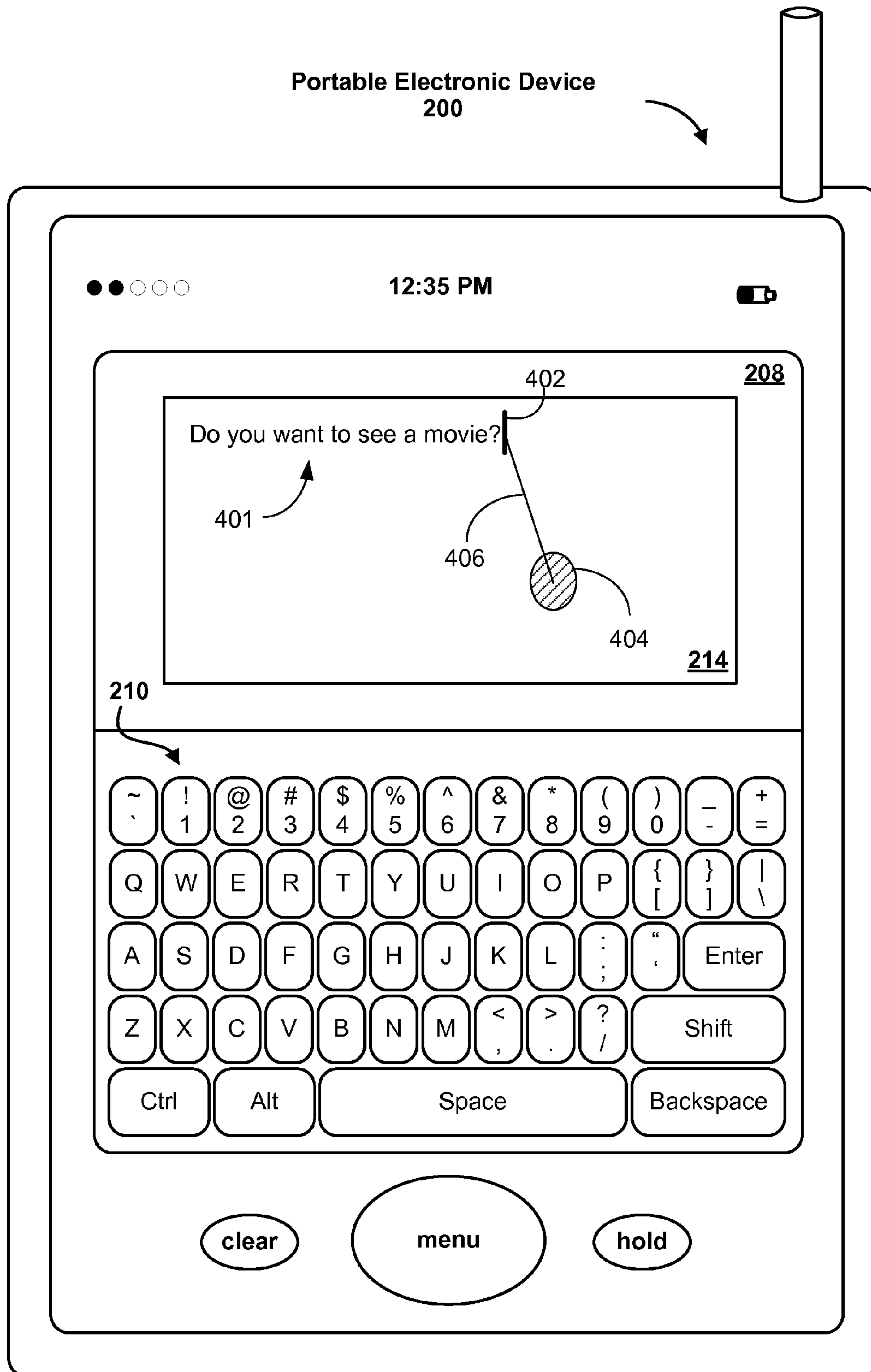


FIG. 4D

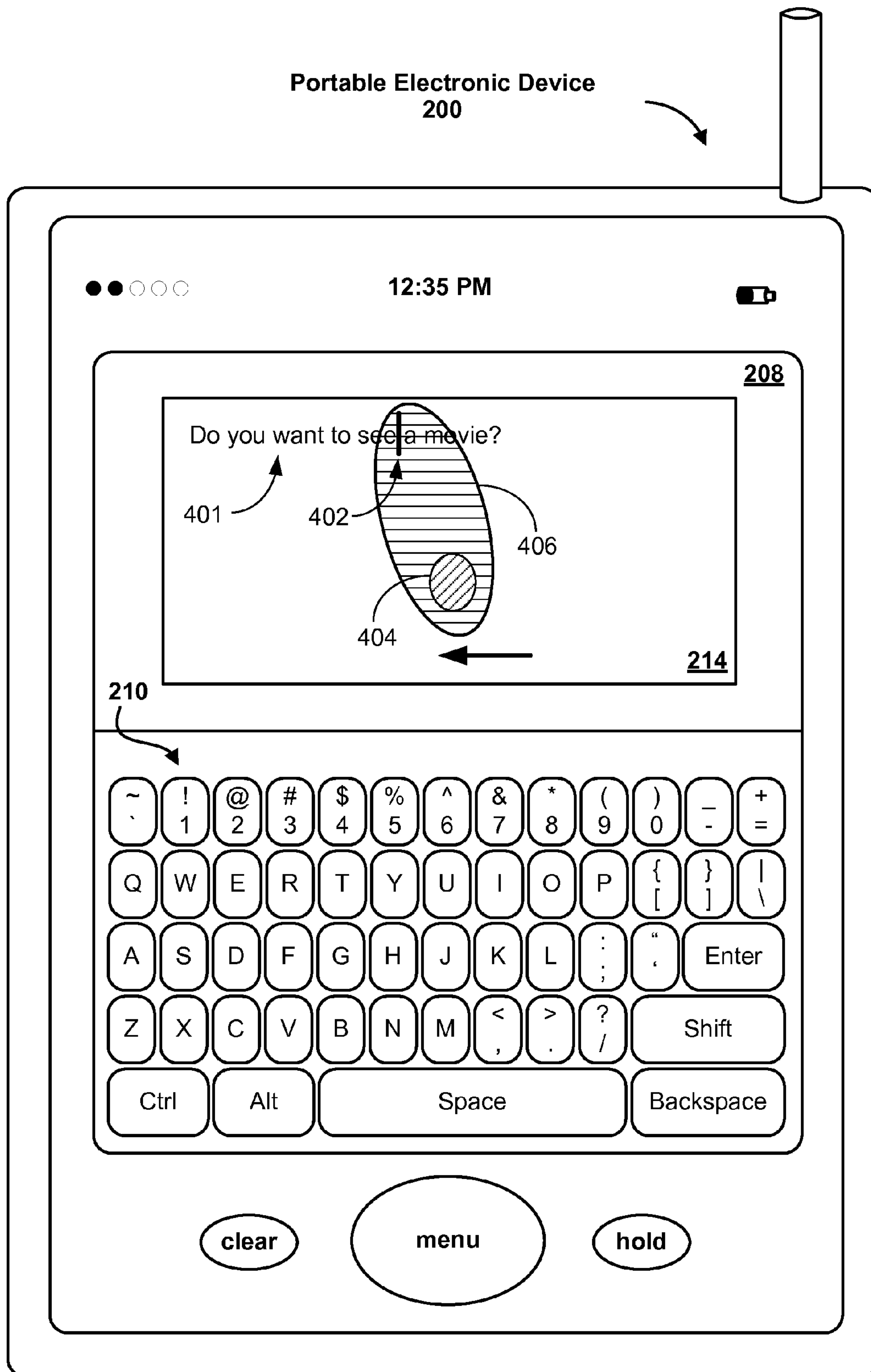


FIG. 4E

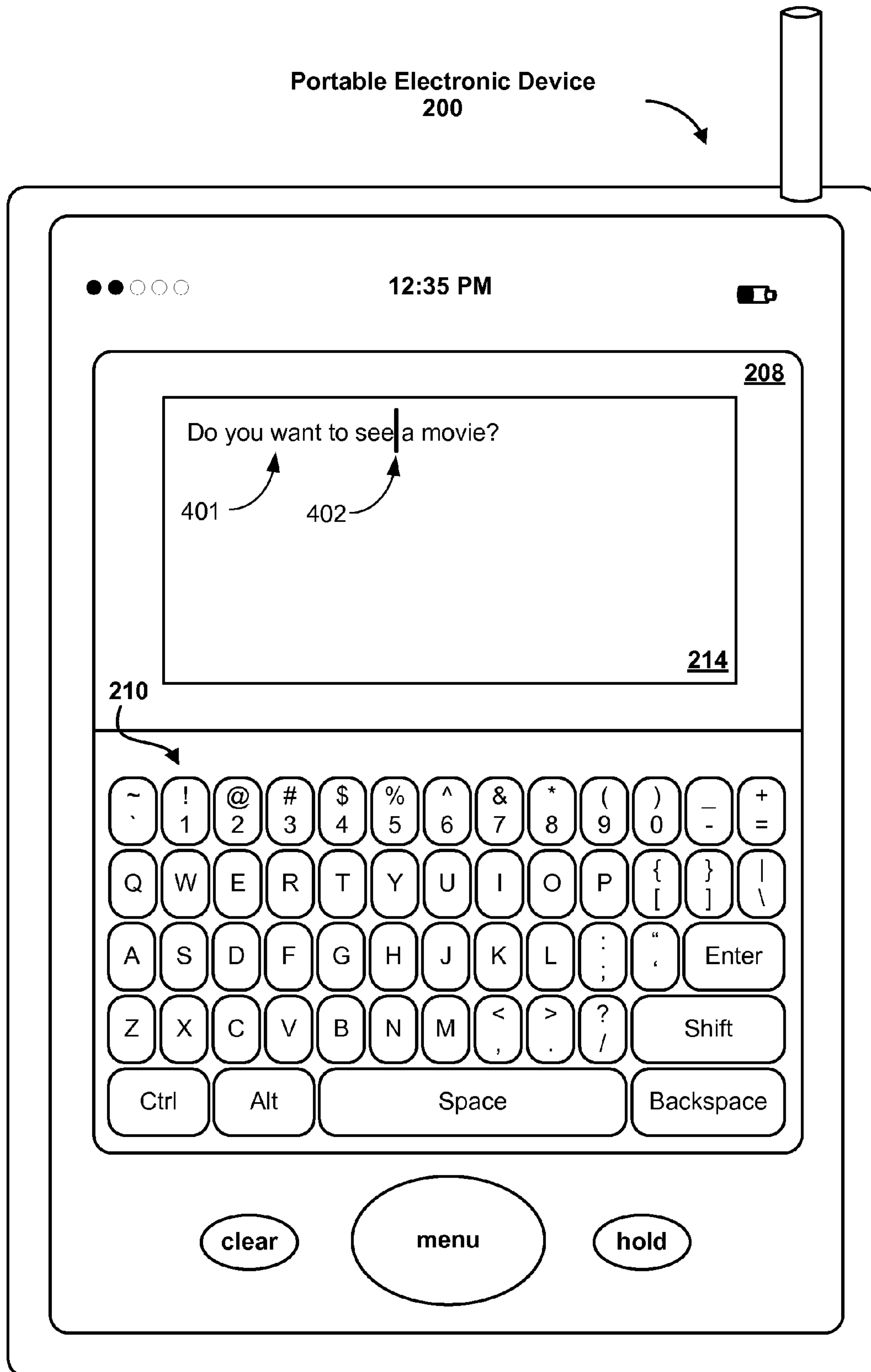


FIG. 4F

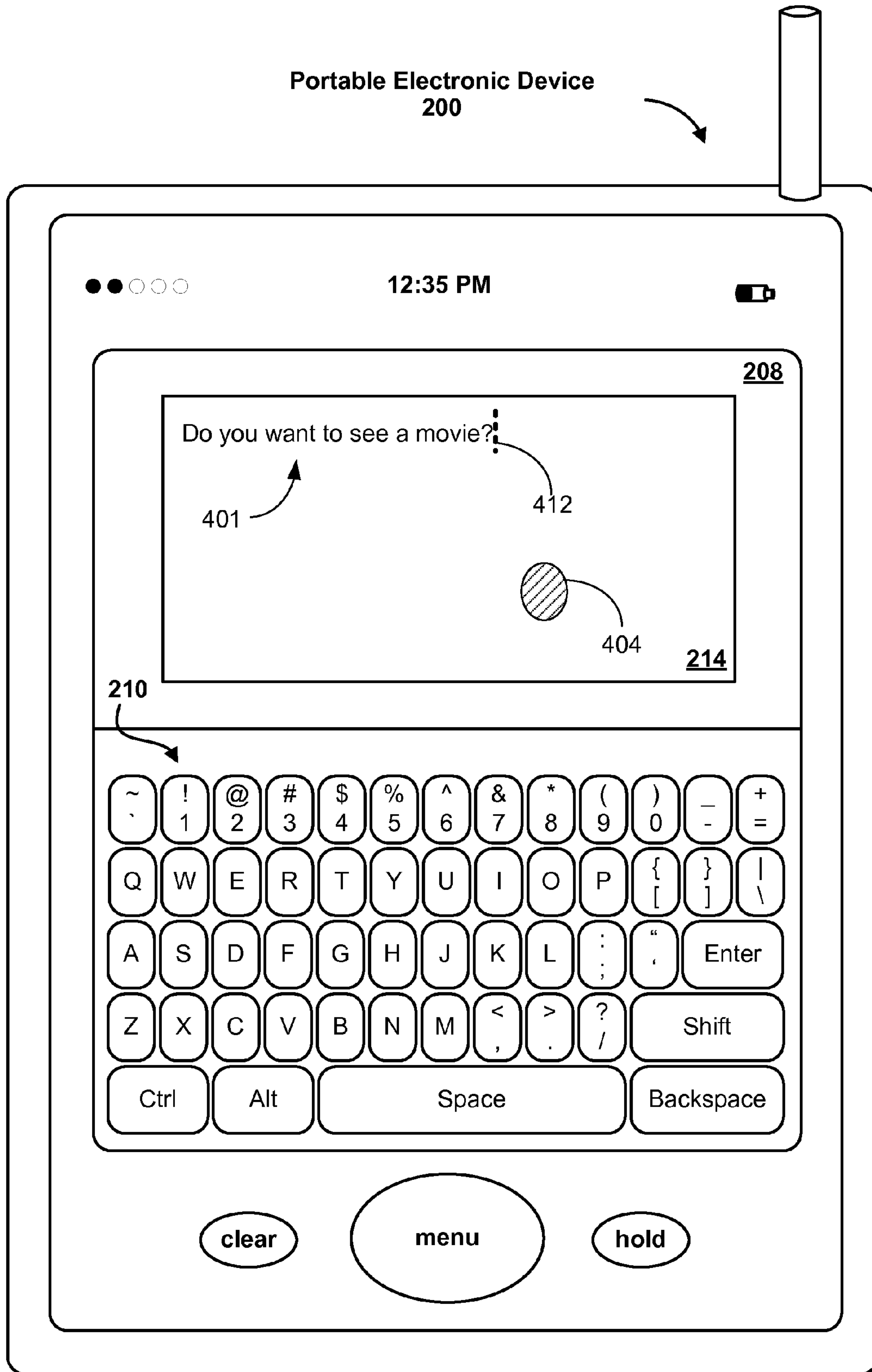


FIG. 5A

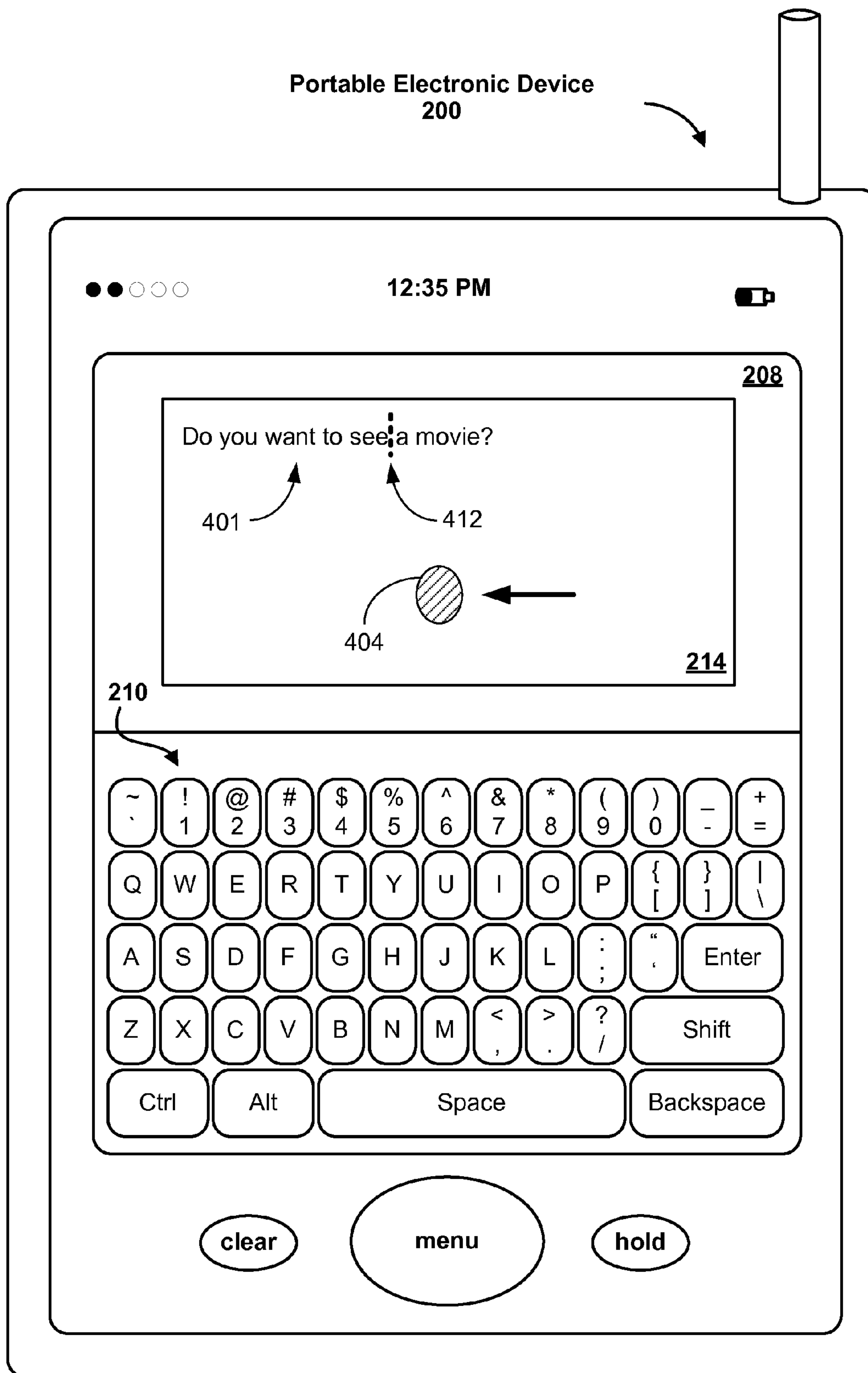


FIG. 5B

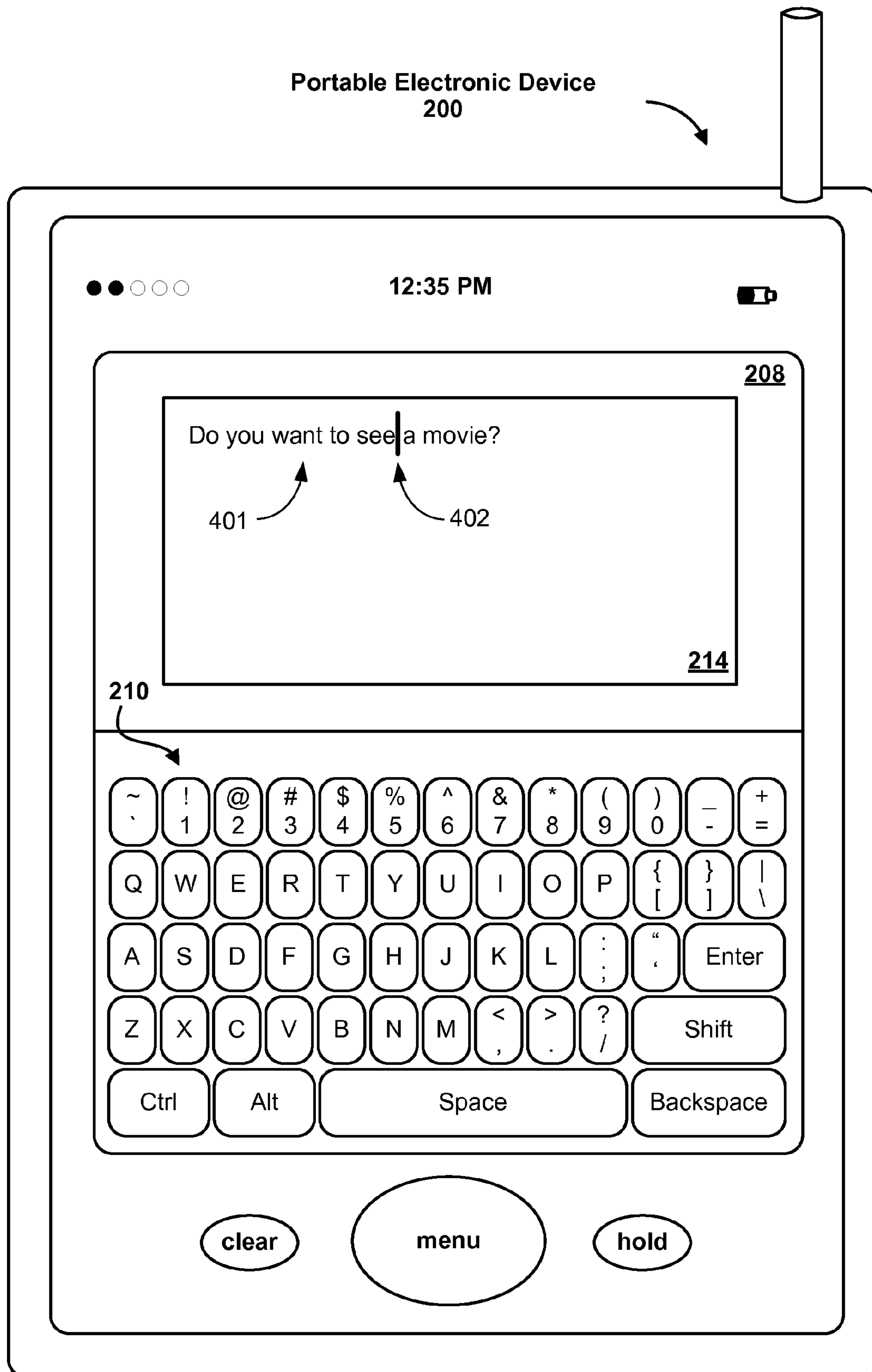


FIG. 5C

1

**METHOD, SYSTEM, AND GRAPHICAL USER
INTERFACE FOR POSITIONING AN
INSERTION MARKER IN A TOUCH SCREEN
DISPLAY**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 11/553,436, filed Oct. 26, 2006 now U.S. Pat. No. 7,856,605, entitled "Method, System, and Graphical User Interface for Positioning an Insertion Marker in a Touch Screen Display," which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The disclosed embodiments relate generally to user interfaces, and more particularly, to a method, system, and user interface for positioning an insertion marker in a touch-sensitive display.

BACKGROUND

As portable electronic devices become more compact, and the amount of information to be processed and stored increases, it has become a significant challenge to design a user interface that allows users to easily interact with the device. This is unfortunate because the user interface is the gateway through which users receive not only content but also responses to user actions or behaviors, including user attempts to access a device's features or tools. Some portable electronic devices (e.g., mobile telephones, sometimes called mobile phones, cell phones, cellular telephones, and the like) have resorted to adding more pushbuttons, increasing the density of push buttons, overloading the functions of pushbuttons, or using complex menu systems to allow a user to access, store and manipulate data. These conventional user interfaces often result in complicated key sequences and menu hierarchies that must be memorized by the user. In addition, as the number of pushbuttons has increased, the proximity of neighboring buttons often makes it difficult for users to activate a desired pushbutton.

Some portable devices now have user interfaces based on a touch-sensitive display (also known as a "touch screen"). The user interacts with a graphical user interface via the touch-sensitive display. The user may operate the interface with a stylus or a digit. Operating a user interface on a touch-sensitive display with a digit (e.g., a finger), however, poses some problems. Because of the relatively small screen sizes on the portable devices, a digit making contact with the touch screen can obscure a sizable portion of the screen and whatever information that is displayed in the obscured portion. Furthermore, operating the interface with a digit may be less precise, because the contact area of a digit with the touch-sensitive display is typically larger than the contact area of a pointed object such as a stylus. This precision problem is particularly acute in text entry applications, where imprecise positioning of the cursor or character insertion marker can make text entry inefficient and frustrate users.

Accordingly, there is need for more efficient ways to position an insertion marker in a touch sensitive display.

SUMMARY

The above deficiencies and other problems associated with user interfaces for portable devices are reduced or eliminated by the disclosed device that includes an insertion marker placement aid.

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According to some embodiments, a computer-implemented method includes, at a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, displaying an insertion marker placement aid in the touch screen display; detecting movement of the finger contact; and moving the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a graphical user interface on a portable electronic device with a touch screen display includes an insertion marker and an insertion marker placement aid, wherein the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid move in the touch screen display in accordance with the detected movement of a finger that contacts the touch screen display.

According to some embodiments, a portable electronic device includes a touch screen display, one or more processors, memory, and one or more programs, wherein the one or more programs are stored in the memory and configured to be executed by the one or more processors. The one or more programs include instructions for displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; instructions for detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; instructions for responding to the detected finger contact by displaying an insertion marker placement aid in the touch screen display; instructions for detecting movement of the finger contact; and instructions for moving the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a computer-program product includes a computer readable storage medium and a computer program mechanism embedded therein. The computer program mechanism includes instructions which, when executed by a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, cause the device to display an insertion marker in the touch screen display; to detect a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, to display an insertion marker placement aid in the touch screen display; to detect movement of the finger contact; and to move the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a portable electronic device with a touch screen display includes means for displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; means for detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, means for displaying an insertion marker placement aid in the touch screen display; means for detecting movement of the finger contact; and means for moving the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a computer-implemented method includes, at a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, modifying the appearance of the insertion marker in the touch screen display; detecting movement of the finger contact; and moving the modified insertion marker in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a graphical user interface on a portable electronic device with a touch screen display includes an insertion marker wherein, in response to detection of a finger contact with the touch screen display, the appearance of the insertion marker is modified and the modi-

fied insertion marker is moved in accordance with detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a portable electronic device includes a touch screen display, one or more processors, memory, and at least one program, wherein the at least one program is stored in the memory and configured to be executed by the one or more processors. The at least one program includes instructions for displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; instructions for detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; instructions for, in response to the detected finger contact, modifying the appearance of the insertion marker in the touch screen display; instructions for detecting movement of the finger contact; and instructions for moving the modified insertion marker in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a computer-program product includes a computer readable storage medium and a computer program mechanism embedded therein. The computer program mechanism includes instructions which, when executed by a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, cause the device to display an insertion marker in the touch screen display; detect a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, modify the appearance of the insertion marker in the touch screen display; detect movement of the finger contact; and move the modified insertion marker in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

According to some embodiments, a portable electronic device with a touch screen display includes means for displaying an insertion marker in the touch screen display; means for detecting a finger contact with the touch screen display; in response to the detected finger contact, means for modifying the appearance of the insertion marker in the touch screen display; means for detecting movement of the finger contact; and means for moving the modified insertion marker in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the aforementioned embodiments of the invention as well as additional embodiments thereof, reference should be made to the Description of Embodiments below, in conjunction with the following drawings in which like reference numerals refer to corresponding parts throughout the figures.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a portable electronic device in accordance with some embodiments.

FIG. 2 illustrates a portable electronic device having a touch screen and a soft keyboard in accordance with some embodiments.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating a process for positioning an insertion marker via an insertion marker placement aid in accordance with some embodiments.

FIGS. 4A-4F illustrate a user interface for positioning an insertion marker via an insertion marker placement aid in accordance with some embodiments.

FIGS. 5A-5C illustrate an alternative user interface for positioning an insertion marker in accordance with some embodiments.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. In the following detailed description, numerous specific

details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known methods, procedures, components, and circuits have not been described in detail so as not to unnecessarily obscure aspects of the embodiments.

Embodiments of user interfaces and associated processes for using a portable electronic device are described. In some embodiments, the device is a portable communications device such as a mobile telephone. The user interface may include a click wheel in addition to a touch screen. A click wheel is a physical user-interface device that may provide navigation commands based on an angular displacement of the wheel or a point of contact with the wheel by a user of the device. A click wheel may also be used to provide a user command corresponding to selection of one or more items, for example, when the user of the device presses down on at least a portion of the wheel. For simplicity, in the discussion that follows, a portable communications device (e.g., a cellular telephone that may also contain other functions, such as SMS, PDA and/or music player functions) that includes a touch screen is used as an exemplary embodiment. It should be understood, however, that the user interfaces and associated processes may be applied to other devices, such as personal computers and laptops, which may include one or more other physical user-interface devices, such as a click wheel, a keyboard, a mouse and/or a joystick.

The various applications that may be executed on the device may use at least one common physical user-interface device, such as the touch screen. In embodiments that include a click wheel, one or more functions of the click wheel as well as corresponding information displayed on the device may be adjusted and/or varied from one application to the next and/or within a respective application. In this way, a common physical architecture (such as the touch screen) of the device may support the variety of applications with user interfaces that are intuitive and transparent.

The user interfaces may include one or more keyboard embodiments. The keyboard embodiments may include standard (QWERTY) and/or non-standard configurations of symbols on the displayed icons of the keyboard. The keyboard embodiments may include a reduced number of icons (or soft keys) relative to the number of keys in existing physical keyboards, such as that for a typewriter. This may make it easier for users to select one or more icons in the keyboard, and thus, one or more corresponding symbols. The keyboard embodiments may be adaptive. For example, displayed icons may be modified in accordance with user actions, such as selecting one or more icons and/or one or more corresponding symbols. One or more applications on the portable device may utilize common and/or different keyboard embodiments. Thus, the keyboard embodiment used may be tailored to at least some of the applications. In some embodiments, one or more keyboard embodiments may be tailored to a respective user. For example, based on a word usage history (lexicography, slang, individual usage) of the respective user. Some of the keyboard embodiments may be adjusted to reduce a probability of a user error when selecting one or more icons, and thus one or more symbols, when using the keyboard embodiments.

Attention is now directed to an embodiment of a portable electronic device. FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a portable electronic device **100** having a touch-sensitive display **112**. The touch-sensitive display **112** is sometimes called a "touch screen" for convenience. The device **100** may include a memory controller **120**, one or more

data processors, image processors and/or central processing units **118** and a peripherals interface **116**. The memory controller **120**, the one or more processors **118** and/or the peripherals interface **116** may be separate components or may be integrated, such as in one or more integrated circuits **104**. The various components in the device **100** may be coupled by one or more communication buses or signal lines **103**.

If the device **110** includes picture taking capabilities, the peripherals interface **116** is coupled to an optical sensor **148**, such as a CMOS or CCD image sensor. The peripherals interface **116** is also coupled RF circuitry **108**; audio circuitry **110**; and/or an input/output (I/O) subsystem **106**. The audio circuitry **110** may be coupled to a speaker **142** and a microphone **144**. The device **100** may support voice recognition and/or voice replication. The RF circuitry **108** may be coupled to one or more antennas **146** and may allow communication with one or more additional devices, computers and/or servers using a wireless network. The device **100** may support a variety of communications protocols, including code division multiple access (CDMA), Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM), Enhanced Data GSM Environment (EDGE), Wi-Fi (such as IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g and/or IEEE 802.11n), Bluetooth, Wi-MAX, a protocol for email, instant messaging, and/or a short message service (SMS), or any other suitable communication protocol, including communication protocols not yet developed as of the filing date of this document. In an exemplary embodiment, the device **100** may be, at least in part, a mobile phone (e.g., a cellular telephone).

The I/O subsystem **106** includes a touch screen controller **132** and/or other input controller(s) **134**. The touch-screen controller **132** is coupled to a touch-sensitive screen or touch sensitive display system **112**. The touch screen **112** and touch screen controller **132** may detect contact and any movement or break thereof using any of a plurality of touch sensitivity technologies now known or later developed, including but not limited to capacitive, resistive, infrared, and surface acoustic wave technologies, as well as other proximity sensor arrays or other elements for determining one or more points of contact with the touch-sensitive screen **112**. The touch-sensitive screen **112** may have a resolution in excess of 100 dpi. In an exemplary embodiment, the touch-sensitive screen **112** has a resolution of approximately 168 dpi. The other input controller(s) **134** may be coupled to other input/control devices **114**, such as one or more buttons. In some alternate embodiments, input controller(s) **134** may be coupled to any (or none) of the following: a keyboard, infrared port, USB port, and/or a pointer device such as a mouse. The one or more buttons (not shown) may include an up/down button for volume control of the speaker **142** and/or the microphone **144**. The one or more buttons (not shown) may include a push button. A quick press of the push button (not shown) may disengage a lock of the touch screen **112**. A longer press of the push button (not shown) may turn power to the device **100** on or off. The user may be able to customize a functionality of one or more of the buttons. The touch screen **112** is used to implement virtual or soft buttons and/or one or more keyboards.

In some embodiments, the device **100** may include circuitry for supporting a location determining capability, such as that provided by the Global Positioning System (GPS). In some embodiments, the device **100** may be used to play back recorded music, such as one or more files, such as MP3 files or AAC files. In some embodiments, the device **100** may include the functionality of an MP3 player, such as an iPod (trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.). In some embodiments, the device **100** may include a multi-pin (e.g., 30-pin) connector that is compatible with the iPod.

The device **100** also includes a power system **137** for powering the various components. The power system **137** may include a power management system, one or more power sources (e.g., battery, alternating current (AC)), a recharging system, a power failure detection circuit, a power converter or inverter, a power status indicator (e.g., a light-emitting diode (LED)) and any other components associated with the generation, management and distribution of power in portable devices. The device **100** may also include one or more external ports **135** for connecting the device **100** to other devices.

Memory controller **120** may be coupled to memory **102** with one or more types of computer readable medium. Memory **102** may include high-speed random access memory and/or non-volatile memory, such as one or more magnetic disk storage devices, one or more optical storage devices, and/or flash memory. Memory **102** may store an operating system **122**, such as Darwin, RTXC, LINUX, UNIX, OS X, WINDOWS, or an embedded operating system such as VxWorks. The operating system **122** may include procedures (or sets of instructions) for handling basic system services and for performing hardware dependent tasks. Memory **102** may also store communication procedures (or sets of instructions) in a communication module **124**. The communication procedures may be used for communicating with one or more additional devices, one or more computers and/or one or more servers. The memory **102** may include a display module (or a set of instructions) **125**, a contact/motion module (or a set of instructions) **126** to determine one or more points of contact and/or their movement, and a graphics module (or a set of instructions) **128**. The graphics module **128** may support “widgets,” that is, modules or applications with embedded graphics. The widgets may be implemented using JavaScript, HTML, Adobe Flash, or other suitable computer program languages.

Memory **102** may also include one or more applications **130**. Examples of applications that may be stored in memory **102** include email applications, text messaging or instant messaging applications, web browsers, memo pad applications, address books or contact lists, calendars, picture taking and management applications, and music playing and management applications.

Also in memory **102** are an insertion marker module (or set of instructions) **132** and an insertion marker placement aid module (or set of instructions) **134**. The insertion marker module and insertion marker placement aid module includes instructions for controlling various aspects, such as movement, display style, and so forth, of the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid, respectively. An insertion marker is a visual object that is displayed on the touch screen to indicate the location where a character entered by the user will be inserted. The insertion marker may also be described as a cursor, insertion point, insertion bar, or pointer. As used in the specification and claims, the insertion marker placement aid is a visual object, separate from the insertion marker, that helps provides visual feedback to the user with regard to control and position of an insertion marker in response to contact(s) with the touch screen by the user’s finger. Further details regarding the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid are described below.

Each of the above identified modules and applications correspond to a set of instructions for performing one or more functions described above. These modules (i.e., sets of instructions) need not be implemented as separate software programs, procedures or modules. The various modules and sub-modules may be rearranged and/or combined. Memory **102** may include additional modules and/or sub-modules, or fewer modules and/or sub-modules. Memory **102**, therefore,

may include a subset or a superset of the above identified modules and/or sub-modules. Various functions of the device **100** may be implemented in hardware and/or in software, including in one or more signal processing and/or application specific integrated circuits.

Attention is now directed towards embodiments of user interfaces and associated processes that may be implemented on the device **100**. FIG. **2** is a schematic diagram illustrating an embodiment of a user interface for a portable electronic device **200**. The device **200** includes a touch screen **208**. The touch screen may display one or more trays. A tray is a predefined region within a graphical user interface. One tray may include a user entry interface, such as a keyboard **210** that includes a plurality of icons. The icons may include one or more symbols. In this embodiment, as well as others described below, a user may select one or more of the icons, and thus, one or more of the corresponding symbols, by making contact or touching the keyboard **210**, for example, with one or more fingers **212** (not drawn to scale in the figure). The contact may correspond to the one or more icons. In some embodiments, selection of an icon occurs when the user breaks contact with the icon. In some embodiments, the contact may include a gesture, such as one or more taps, one or more swipes (from left to right, right to left, upward and/or downward) and/or a rolling of a finger (from right to left, left to right, upward and/or downward) that has made contact with the device **200**. In some embodiments, inadvertent contact with an icon may not select a corresponding symbol. For example, a swipe gesture with an icon may not select a corresponding symbol when the gesture corresponding to selection is a tap.

The device **200** may include a display tray **214**. The display tray **214** may display one or more of the characters and/or symbols that are selected by the user. The device **200** may also include one or more physical buttons, such as the clear, hold and menu buttons shown in FIG. The menu button may be used to navigate to any application in a set of applications that may be executed on the device **200**. Alternatively, in some embodiments, the clear, hold, and/or menu buttons are implemented as soft keys in a GUI in touch screen **208**.

Attention is now directed toward FIG. **3**, which illustrates a process flow **300** for positioning an insertion marker via an insertion marker placement aid in accordance with some embodiments. An insertion marker is displayed on a touch screen (**302**). The insertion marker may be displayed in an application that includes text entry, such as a memo pad, email, or short message service (SMS) application. In some embodiments, the insertion marker is displayed in a first area (for example, display tray **214**) that also includes text entered by the user via a keyboard (for example, keyboard **210**) that is located in a second area. A contact on the touch screen, formed by a finger, is detected (**304**). The finger contact forms a contact area on the touch screen. In some embodiments, the contact area is not visually displayed to the user. An insertion marker placement aid is displayed on the touch screen (**306**). In some embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid is not displayed if the detected finger contact is initially in the display area containing the keyboard **210**; such contact is interpreted as an attempt to hit a key on the keyboard **210** rather than an attempt to position the insertion marker. In some embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid is displayed if the detected finger contact is initially in an inputted text area (for example, display tray **214**), even if the same finger contact is later in the display area containing the keyboard **210**; such contact is interpreted as an attempt to position the insertion marker along the bottom of the inputted text area.

A movement of the finger across the touch screen is detected (**308**). In response to the detected movement, the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid is moved in accordance with the detected movement (**310**).

Both the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid are moved in the general direction of the detected movement. For example, if the detected movement is rightward, the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid are moved rightward. In some embodiments, the movement of the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid is confined to the first area, where user-entered text is displayed. That first area may be the display tray **214**.

The insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid moves in accordance with any movement of the finger across the touch screen as long as the finger contact on the touch screen remains unbroken from when the finger contact on the touch screen is detected in block **304**. If the contact with the touch screen is broken (and thus the contact with the touch screen is no longer detected), the insertion marker placement aid is removed from display and the insertion marker remains at its last position. In some embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid is removed from display after a predetermined time (e.g., a time in the range 0.25-5.0 seconds) has elapsed after the finger contact is broken and during which contact is not reestablished. Additionally, in some embodiments, when the insertion marker placement aid is removed from display, the insertion marker placement aid is faded out.

Attention is now directed toward FIGS. **4A-4F**, which illustrate a user interface for positioning an insertion marker via an insertion marker placement aid in accordance with some embodiments. Text **401** entered by the user may be displayed in the display tray **214**. The text **401** may be entered by the user using the keyboard **210**. An insertion marker **402** may be displayed in the display tray **214** to indicate the location where the next entered character will be inserted. In some embodiments, the insertion marker **402** is a vertical bar. In some other embodiments, the insertion marker **402** is a rectangular block, an underscore, a vertical bar with two cross-bars at the top and bottom (an "I-bar" or "I-beam"), crosshairs, or a pointer arrow. The insertion marker **402** may be displayed with or without a blinking effect.

When a user of the device **200** makes contact with the touch screen with a finger **212** (not shown), the contact forms a contact area **404** (not drawn to scale) on the touch screen **208**. As long as the contact with the touch screen **208** remains unbroken, the contact area **404** remains. It should be appreciated, however, that while the contact area **404** is illustrated as a regular shape in the Figures, that is not necessarily so. The contact area **404** may be a regular or irregular shape. Additionally, the shape of the contact area **404** may vary throughout the duration of the contact.

When the contact is detected, an insertion marker placement aid **406** is displayed in the display tray **214**. The insertion marker placement aid **406** provides visual feedback to the user that the insertion marker **402** may be repositioned by the user. The insertion marker placement aid **406** also provides visual feedback to the user with respect to the current position of the insertion marker **402**. This visual feedback facilitates movement of the insertion pointer by the user without the user placing his finger directly over the insertion marker **402**, thereby allowing the user to see the insertion marker as it is moved to a position of the user's choosing.

In some embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid **406** is an oval-shaped or some other bounded area that is displayed with a different color, shading and/or brightness (as indicated by the hatching in the interior area of the insertion

marker placement aid **406**, as shown in FIGS. **4B**, **4C**, and **4E**) than the background of the display tray **214**. In some other embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid **406** may be some other shape or object, such as a line connecting the insertion marker **402** and the contact area **404**.

In some embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid **406** overlaps both the insertion marker **402** and the contact area **404**, as shown in FIGS. **4B**, **4D**, **4E**. In some other embodiments, the insertion marker placement aid **406** need not overlap either the insertion marker **402** or the contact area **404**. For example, the insertion marker placement aid **406** may overlap either the insertion marker **402** or the contact area **404** but not both, as shown in FIG. **4C**. More generally, the insertion marker placement aid may “overlap” the insertion marker and/or the contact area by intersecting or completely enclosing the insertion marker and/or the contact area, respectively. While in some embodiments the contact area **404** is visually displayed to the user, in other embodiments the contact area **404** is not visually displayed to the user. However, even when it is not explicitly or separately displayed, the contact area **404** is tracked by the device and is used to control the position and movement of the insertion marker **402** and the insertion marker placement aid **406**.

While the finger **212** is still in contact with the touch screen **208**, the user may move the finger **212** across the touch screen **208**, and thus moving the contact area **404** in the process. As shown in FIG. **4E**, the insertion marker placement aid **406** and the insertion marker **402** move along with the contact area **404**. The insertion marker **402**, which was at the end of the text **401**, is now at a position that is closer to the middle of the text **401**. When the user removes the contact by lifting the finger **212** away from the touch screen **404**, the contact area **404** and the insertion marker placement aid **406** is removed from display, and the insertion marker **402** comes to rest at its last position, as shown in FIG. **4F**.

The embodiments described above enable a user of a portable device to easily move and position an insertion marker displayed on the touch screen without the aid of a precision instrument (such as a stylus). The user can make contact with the touch screen with a finger, away from the location of the insertion marker, without obscuring the insertion marker or content in the immediate vicinity of the insertion marker. An insertion marker placement aid is displayed to indicate to the user that the insertion marker is under the user’s control and may be repositioned by the user. The user moves the finger contact, and the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid moves in accordance with the movement of the finger contact. Once the insertion marker is in the user’s desired position, the user breaks the finger contact and the insertion marker is left in the desired position. In some instances, finger movements associated with breaking contact with the display result in a cursor position not intended by the user. To avoid this unintended result, in some embodiments, heuristic rules are used to determine the position of the insertion marker after the user breaks the finger contact. For example, the final position of the cursor may be made in accordance with the average location of the user’s finger during a predetermined time interval just before contact with the display was broken. Alternatively, the final position of the cursor may ignore finger movements in a predetermined time interval before contact with the display was broken.

The embodiments described above provide visual feedback regarding control and position of the insertion marker to the user via an insertion marker placement aid. In some other embodiments, visual feedback may be provided without an insertion marker placement aid, as illustrated in FIGS. **5A-5C**. Instead of displaying an insertion marker placement

aid, the insertion marker **402** may be displayed with modifications when the user makes contact with the touch screen **208**; the insertion marker is displayed as a modified insertion marker **412** (FIG. **5A**). In some embodiments, the modified insertion marker **412** is displayed with a different color, brightness, pattern (e.g., dashed or patterned vs. solid) and/or size than the un-modified insertion marker **402**.

The user may then move the contact area **404**, moving the modified insertion marker **412** in the process, as shown in FIG. **5B**. Once the modified insertion marker **412** is at the desired position, the user may break the contact, removing the contact area **404**. After the break in contact, the modified insertion marker **412** reverts back to the normal insertion marker **402** (FIG. **5C**); the display modifications from the unmodified insertion marker **402** to the modified insertion marker **412** are reversed. In other aspects, the modified insertion marker operates similarly to the insertion marker placement aid **406**, described above. For example, the modified insertion marker may revert back to the normal insertion marker soon after the break of contact or after the elapse of a predetermined time after the break of contact.

The foregoing description, for purpose of explanation, has been described with reference to specific embodiments. However, the illustrative discussions above are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in view of the above teachings. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable electronic device, comprising:

a touch screen display;
one or more processors;
memory; and

at least one program, wherein the at least one program is stored in the memory and configured to be executed by the one or more processors, the at least one program including instructions for:

displaying an insertion marker in a first area of the touch screen display that includes characters entered using a soft keyboard, wherein the soft keyboard is located in a second area of the touch screen display that is separate from the first area;

detecting a finger contact within the first area of the touch screen display;

in response to detecting the finger contact, displaying an insertion marker placement aid in the first area of the touch screen display;

detecting movement of the finger contact;

moving the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact, wherein movement of the insertion marker is confined to the first area of the touch screen display; and,

in response to detecting movement of the finger contact from the first area into the second area:

maintaining display of the insertion marker placement aid;

moving the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area; and

moving the insertion marker in the first area in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area.

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2. The device of claim 1, wherein the location of the finger contact is separate from the location of the insertion marker.

3. The device of claim 2, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker.

4. The device of claim 2, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker and the location of the finger contact.

5. The device of claim 1, further comprising instructions for removing the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is broken.

6. The device of claim 1, further comprising instructions for removing the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is no longer detected for a predetermined time.

7. A non-transitory computer readable storage medium storing one or more programs, the one or more programs comprising instructions, which when executed by a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, cause the device to:

display an insertion marker in a first area of the touch screen display that includes characters entered using a soft keyboard, wherein the soft keyboard is located in a second area of the touch screen display that is separate from the first area;

detect a finger contact within the first area of the touch screen display;

in response to detecting the finger contact, display an insertion marker placement aid in the first area of the touch screen display;

detect movement of the finger contact;

move the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact, wherein movement of the insertion marker is confined to the first area of the touch screen display; and,

in response to detecting movement of the finger contact from the first area into the second area:

maintain display of the insertion marker placement aid;

move the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area; and

move the insertion marker in the first area in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area.

8. The non-transitory computer readable storage medium of claim 7, wherein the location of the finger contact is separate from the location of the insertion marker.

9. The non-transitory computer readable storage medium of claim 8, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker.

10. The non-transitory computer readable storage medium of claim 8, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker and the location of the finger contact.

11. The non-transitory computer readable storage medium of claim 7, further comprising instructions that cause the device to remove the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is broken.

12. The non-transitory computer readable storage medium of claim 7, further comprising instructions that cause the device to remove the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is no longer detected for a predetermined time.

13. A method, comprising:

at a portable electronic device with a touch screen display: displaying an insertion marker in a first area of the touch screen display that includes characters entered using a

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soft keyboard, wherein the soft keyboard is located in a second area of the touch screen display that is separate from the first area;

detecting a finger contact within the first area of the touch screen display;

in response to detecting the finger contact, displaying an insertion marker placement aid in the first area of the touch screen display;

detecting movement of the finger contact across the touch screen display;

moving the insertion marker and the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact, wherein movement of the insertion marker is confined to the first area of the touch screen display; and,

in response to detecting movement of the finger contact from the first area into the second area:

maintaining display of the insertion marker placement aid;

moving the insertion marker placement aid in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area; and

moving the insertion marker in the first area in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the location of the finger contact is separate from the location of the insertion marker.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the insertion marker placement aid overlaps the location of the insertion marker and the location of the finger contact.

17. The method of claim 13, further comprising removing the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is broken.

18. The method of claim 13, further comprising removing the insertion marker placement aid if finger contact with the touch screen display is no longer detected for a predetermined time.

19. A graphical user interface on a portable electronic device with a touch screen display, comprising:

a soft keyboard located in a second area of the touch screen display that is separate from a first area;

an insertion marker located in the first area of the touch screen display, the first area including characters entered using the soft keyboard; and

an insertion marker placement aid located in the first area of the touch screen display,

wherein:

the insertion marker is confined to move in the first area of the touch screen display in accordance with detected movement of a finger that contacts the touch screen display; and,

in response to detection of movement of the finger contact from the first area into the second area:

the insertion marker placement aid continues to be displayed;

the insertion marker placement aid is moved in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area; and

the insertion marker is moved within in the first area in accordance with the detected movement of the finger contact in the second area.